

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 00631 270048Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8750
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 0631

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PBOR XV CI AR
SUBJECT: COMMENTS OF CHILEAN PRESIDENT ON BEAGLE CHANNEL AND
ANTARCTICA

1. CHILEAN PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S REMARKS UPON RETURNING FROM HIS VISIT TO SOUTHERN CHILE AND ANTARCTICA, AS REPORTED IN WIRE SERVICE STORIES, APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN TAKEN BADLY BY GOA. ON JAN 24 AND 25 REPORTS FROM CHILE QUOTED PINOCHET AS TELLING PRESS ON ARRIVAL BACK FROM ANTARCTICA THAT HE HAD BEEN VISITING "CHILEAN BASES IN CHILEAN TERRITORY" AND THAT IF THIS BOTHERED ANYONE, IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE. HE CITED 1959 ANTARCTIC TREATY AND SAID: "IT SAYS THERE THAT EVERYTHING IS FROZEN (SIC) AND THAT WE HAVE SOVEREIGNTY."

2. PINOCHET ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT A THIRD COUNTRY (UK) WAS JUDGING THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE BECAUSE OTHERWISE NEITHER CHILE NOR ARGENTINA WOULD HAVE CEDED. HE SAID THAT CHILE AWAITS THE VERDICT CALMLY.

3. AT LUNCH JAN 25, MINISTER OF PLANNING (AND FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES VICE-PRESIDENT) GENERAL DIAZ BESSONE TOLD AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS THAT PINOCHET'S REMARKS AS REPORTED WERE "ILL-ADVISED"
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 00631 270048Z

AND "OFFENSIVE," IN VIEW OF GOA. HOWEVER, GOA WOULD REMAIN CALM AND NOT REACT PUBLICLY TO THE COMMENTS. PRESS HAS SO FAR NOT COMMENTED.

4. COMMENT: GOA ALREADY HAS A RATHER DIM VIEW OF PINOCHET'S LEVEL OF SOPHISTICATION, AND REPORTED REMARKS ON ANTARCTICA AND THE BEAGLE CHANNEL ONLY CONFIRM OPINION. CHILEAN CLAIM IN

ANTARCTICA IS, OF COURSE, ROUGHLY OVERLAPPED BY ARGENTINA'S
CLAIM, AND PINOCHET'S REMARK AS REPORTED SEEMS ALMOST BELLIGERENT.
AS IMPRESSION SEEMS TO BE THAT UK AND INTERNATIONAL COURT OF
JUSTICE FINDING ON BEAGLE WILL FAVOR CHILE, PINOCHET COMMENT ON
THAT SUBJECT ALSO CAN BE SEEN AS LESS THAN DIPLOMATIC.
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Message Attributes

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